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SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [I2](#) [SY](#) [IR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES UNDERSCORES USG PRIORITIES WITH  
TURKEY'S NSC SECRETARY-GENERAL ALPOGAN

Classified By: CDA Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11.](#) (S/NF) SUMMARY: In her introductory call on Turkey's NSC Secretary-General Yigit Alpoğan, Charge d'Affaires (CDA)

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urged Turkey to get in lockstep with the US on Syria and Iran, noted continuing USG efforts to recognize northern Cyprus' April 2004 vote in support of the Annan Plan and inquired about PKK action inside Turkey. She urged Turkey to maintain momentum in preparation for the Oct. 3 start of EU accession negotiations and pressed the government to publicly welcome Christian missionaries to Turkey and to prosecute those who commit violence against them. On Syria, Alpoğan stuck to the government line that President Assad should be given time to implement reforms but, on Iran, suggested that Turkey's past policy of cooperation would have to be re-evaluated in light of Ahmadinejad's election as President.

Alpoğan said Turkey was committed to the EU accession talks.

He expected Turkey to sign the Ankara Agreement Extension Protocol in July but to take no further steps towards a Cyprus solution until Cypriot President Papadopoulos leaves office. He pledged to publicly support missionary work in Turkey. Alpoğan did not rule out joint actions in Turkey against the PKK but suggested that US hand-over of PKK members captured in northern Iraq would provide great mileage for bilateral relations. He welcomed an early October or November time frame for his first visit to Washington as SecGen. (We request guidance in para. 9.) END SUMMARY.

TIME TO MOVE FROM WORDS TO ACTION ON SYRIA  
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[12.](#) (C) Charge characterized President Bush's June 8 meeting with PM Erdogan as a positive step to move the bilateral relationship forward. However, she noted that the issues of Syria and Iran remained areas of potential disagreement. The US had made clear our concerns about Syrian actions to interfere in Lebanon's democratization process and undermine the Middle East Peace Process and about the use of Syria as a base by Iraqi resistance forces for operations in Iraq. Alpoğan responded that the official government line was to give Bashar Assad more time and opportunity to get engaged; to help him to reform his own government. This requires continued dialogue. Charge pointed out that given evidence of Syria's interference in Lebanon, Iraq and Israel, the time for dialogue was running out. Without committing to any specific action, Alpoğan acknowledged that following a visit to Israel he better understood the Israeli perspective and said the NSC periodically shares its views with the government.

TURKEY REVIEWING ITS POLICY TOWARDS IRAN  
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[13.](#) (C) Alpoğan acknowledged that Ahmadinejad's recent election as Iran's President came as a surprise to Turkey, and called his receipt of two-thirds of the votes "shocking."

Alpoğan said he did not expect revolutionary change following the election because the mullahs control the country, and, like past President Khatami, Ahmadinejad will gradually become powerless. Still, Turkey will re-evaluate its past policies in support of a stable relationship, economic cooperation and the EU-3 process on Iran's nuclear program. Charge urged close coordination between the US and Turkey on Iran, noting the large reform element in the population. Alpoğan agreed on the need for cooperation but said that the election results belie the existence of a large reform element in Iran. He compared Iranian reformers to wealthy, educated Istanbulites who say Turkey is ready for the EU, oblivious to the large majority of the country that doesn't share their circumstances or perspective.

NO PROGRESS ON CYPRUS UNTIL PAPADOPOULOS GONE  
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[14.](#) (C) Noting USG efforts to support northern Cyprus through the recent visits of trade and Congressional delegations, increased scholarships to northern Cypriot students and other measures, Charge asked about Turkey's strategy to address the Cyprus problem. Alpoğan thanked the US for its support and expressed his hope that we would continue these types of measures. He said Turkey's plan is to wait out Cypriot

President Papadopoulos and deal with his successor. Claiming "there is no hope for him," Alpogan characterized Papadopoulos as "anti-Turk, anti-solution and a terrorist." He dismissed any hope of a compromise with the President, saying "Nothing can be done with him; nothing is ever final with him because he changes his opinion. Turkey will wait two years until he is gone and will ask the EU to be patient." In Alpogan's view, nothing short of this would push the Greek Cypriots to work towards a solution.

BUT WE WILL SIGN THE EXTENSION PROTOCOL IN JULY  
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15. (C) On a more positive note, Alpogan expected Turkey to sign the Ankara Agreement Extension protocol in July. Turkey and the EU had agreed on the text, which is being translated. Charge underscored continued USG support for Turkey's EU accession process. Welcoming PM Erdogan's positive statements about Turkey's accession efforts in the wake of the French and Dutch referendums, she emphasized the importance of continued reforms and a positive public relations effort.

ALPOGAN PLEDGES PUBLIC SUPPORT OF MISSIONARIES  
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16. (C) Charge welcomed the decision on the Protocol but said other issues had to be managed before Oct. 3, such as religious tolerance, and specifically Turkey's perceived discrimination against Christian missionaries. She pressed for public government statements welcoming missionaries and law enforcement action against those who perpetrate crimes against them. Saying he had publicly supported the US/Turkey relationship during the recent difficulties in the bilateral relationship because it was important -- and that the Chief of the Turkish General Staff (CHOD) had followed his lead -- Alpogan pledged to make a public statement welcoming missionaries to Turkey. He cautioned that he could not speak for others in the government, however, and that he would need to carefully time his statement and include it in a broader message on other issues in order for it to be effective.

JOINING FORCES AGAINST THE PKK IN TURKEY  
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17. (S/NF) The PKK terrorist group is a problem that the US and Turkey share, said the Charge. The USG has taken some steps against the PKK but had been unable to fulfill Turkey's request for action in northern Iraq given the security situation. Until circumstances on the ground change enough to allow action in northern Iraq, there might be other steps the US and Turkey could take inside Turkey. Alpogan said that if the date was not disclosed and the actions were kept quiet it might be possible. However, in his opinion, a symbolic but very public action, such as the hand-over of the 3-4 PKK members recently captured by US troops in northern Iraq to Turkey - with or without Osman Ocalan -- would be of great positive significance to US/Turkish relations. Alpogan said that the hand-over could be broadly publicized and would generate significant goodwill. (Note: We have no information to suggest CF are holding any PKK members in Iraq. End Note.)

NSC REORGANIZATION A WORK IN PROGRESS  
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18. (C) Alpogan called the NSC restructuring process which began with his appointment nine months ago a work in progress. With the NSC's new legislative mandate to act as an advisory body, duties had been revised, staff had been reduced from over 300 to around 100 and there were no plans to hire additional personnel. Alpogan claimed the support of the President, Prime Minister and CHOD but admitted it would take time to get complete military buy-in. Despite press reports that the postponement of a decision on a new National Security Policy document -- expected at the June 21 NSC meeting -- was based on Turkish General Staff unhappiness with the wording on Cyprus, internal separatist threats and the importance of the nation state as well as the abbreviated length -- down to 21 pages from over 200 -- Alpogan claimed there was no disagreement among the agencies but that more time was needed for review. In a change from the past, the new document did not list specific internal and external threats. Instead it focused on important foreign policy issues such as weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism and illegal migration. Alpogan had agreed to postpone discussion of the policy document to the NSC meeting in August but in actuality did not plan to "burden the meeting" with this document since that meeting would likely be reserved for farewell speeches in honor of several Generals whose retirement would be announced at the annual Supreme Military Council meeting in early August. (Note: NSC meetings are bimonthly so this effectively puts off discussion until October. End Note.)

19. (U) Charge offered to share information on the organization and function of the US NSC and looked forward to

a visit by Alpogan to Washington to compare notes firsthand. Alpogan welcomed a opportunity to do so this fall at a time convenient to NSA Hadley. He asked for two alternative time frames and suggested early October or early November. (Comment: Post would appreciate Department assistance to check NSA Hadley's availability during these time periods. End Comment.)

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